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Cedarville Through the Eyes of a Farmer's Wife: The Martha McMillan Journals, 1867-1913

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The [McMillan Journal Collection](#) is an archive of the journals of Martha McMillan of Cedarville, Ohio, who maintained a daily journal from 1867 until her death in 1913.

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"Cedarville through the eyes of a farmer's wife: the Martha McMillan Journals, 1867-1913."

Tucked away inside the Cedarville University archives is a treasure... a set of journals that begins in 1867 and continues to 1913, written by Martha McMillan of Cedarville, a gift to the University from her grandchildren, especially Lenora MacMillan, her granddaughter-in-law.

Martha Elizabeth Murdock [born January 26, 1844 in Clinton county, Ohio] was married to James McMillan on January 15, 1867. They lived in the McMillan homestead near Cedarville where James was a farmer well-known for the raising of sheep, hogs and high-bred trotting horses as well as the usual field crops. From the day of her marriage until about a week before her death, Martha kept a journal of the daily events in the home and on the farm, as well as community activities. Martha McMillan had no special qualification to write these journals, she was just a farm wife who went to church and sent her children to school in this community. But her eloquence, insights, and faith are clearly evident in her recollections.

Martha kept the daily journal for more than 46 years. The journals comprise maybe 8 to 10,000 handwritten pages, back to back with no margins. **[point out samples on display]** Although her style was probably common in its day, if you didn't know better, you'd think you were looking at volumes and volumes of ... illegible shorthand.

However, there are passages where her script is a little larger, perhaps her pen tip was a little finer, where you can more clearly make out the narrative. And when you do, you find many gems that provide a glimpse of Martha's daily experiences.

- You could say Martha was an **ethnographer [observer of human culture]**, recording observations about 19th century farm life in rural Ohio.

- Or perhaps she was a **local historian**, writing about her community and its activities, including for me the founding of Cedarville University, then Cedarville College.
- But no question, she was a **witness to the changes in American life** at the turn of the 20th century.

Early in the first journal, the year of her marriage 1867, Martha says: **“Tonight James and I stand upon the threshold of a new existence in which the future, like a great unfathomed ocean, is spread out before us. O! May we glide along its bosom in peace and love until, at last, we reach its sunset shores...”**

With these words, written on her wedding day in January, 1867, Martha Murdock McMillan began a handwritten journal of her life — her family, her faith, and her farm.

Martha and her husband, James, lived about four miles east of Cedarville—the home is still there. Martha and James were the second generation to live in the house near where his father had settled in 1832 when he came up from South Carolina. In 1988, according to Lenora MacMillan, the fifth generation was living in the home on the road which Martha called the “Pike” and now is known as U.S. Route 42 East with house number 4139. Together, James and Martha raised seven children to adulthood. An eighth child died at 19, a ninth child died in infancy, and a tenth at birth. No doubt all of her children were greatly influenced by their mother’s deep faith and strict adherence to her strong belief in Christ and her knowledge and teaching of the Bible. Martha taught a Sabbath School from 1897 to 1910 on Sunday afternoons in the McMillan School House near their home. She felt a need for this ministry so that immediate neighbors who were not able to get into Cedarville for church could have a Sunday school for their children. She kept meticulous attendance records [we have the Record Book]. Three of her children were eventually involved in ministry. Homer, a member of the first graduating class of Cedarville College in 1897, became a minister in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., a secretary of the Executive Committee for Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., and was elected to the Cedarville College Board of Trustees. Another son, Jason, also became a minister in the Southern Presbyterian Church. Their oldest daughter, Frances (Fannie), was married to a minister of a United Presbyterian Church in New York.

Martha says much in the journals about daily life on the farm, for that was the primary scope of her experience for most of her married life. Soon after her marriage, life on the farm started to evidence its challenges. Martha wrote in her first year of marriage. **“Some days I can’t help feeling that housekeeping is going to be more real than I ever dreamed,”** So much for “gliding along that great unfathomed ocean,” she mentioned on her wedding day. She continues, **“For this life I can’t help sighing.”** Yet she writes on, revealing a glimpse of steadfast character that will see her through so much joy and heartache in years to come: **“I must try and banish such feelings forever from my heart and look for the bright side.”**

In her 1868 journal, she records in April that James is discouraged by the weather and wonders if he shouldn’t sell out and start a grocery business. In May... she says it’s “very wet” and the corn was planted late. But things look up in June. On the 23rd, they sold 585 sheep to an Illinois man and took 22 days in July to drive them there on foot. In August, they entered sheep in the Jamestown fair. Forty-four men came in November to help with a barn raising.

In 1871, she shares that sheep shearing began on May 19, and they completed the shearing of 1,000 sheep on June 10. In September they started cutting corn to put into shocks; in November they sold 78 hogs at 4 cents a pound, each hog averaging 330 pounds. During these years James had a large number of sheep, hogs, milk cows, chickens, and bees. He raised corn, wheat, hay pumpkins, apples, and potatoes.

In 1881, a late March snowstorm caps an especially snowy winter. Martha says on April 6: **“Thawing some today.... This afternoon’s sun will soon take the snow off. This has certainly been an unusual winter for snow – Winter began by snowing the 18th of November. The snow lay on the ground from December 8 to February 7th – 62 days during which time there was continuous sleighing in Greene County.”** She says it was April 20 before the ground was dry enough for plowing.

Martha's grandson Rankin records in his notes on her journal from 1885 that during late summer and early Fall, her son Fred and one of the hired hands made many trips to Springfield by horse and wagon taking sweet corn, tomatoes, later apples and pumpkins to sell at the market. They would leave home at midnight to be at the market by the morning hours and would get home about 4:00 in the afternoon. What a long day! Rankin also mentions that during this time all interior walls and ceilings were whitewashed each year. They used carpet on the floors only in winter. Took them up in April, and put them back down in November. All heating was done with wood and some coal, either in fireplaces or heating stoves.

Martha records in September 1894, **"A most beautiful day,"** and then mentions how two of her sons and extended family are helping with farm chores. **"Clayton is at home from school to help with the wheat. Jason went back to school at noon, he has been home most of the week... Uncle Joe is helping Aunt Katy and me with the apple butter making. We did not finish until 9:00 this evening."**

She records details worthy of an almanac like planting the corn on the 6th of May... how the spring of 1870 was the "driest on record," or how much it rained in June and July... making a year's supply of soap in November. She records other climatological milestones including each year's first freeze and first snow.

Between the apple butter making, the child rearing, caring for animals, and feeding the hired help (who, by the way, earned \$80 plus room and board for six months of labor), there was plenty of work to be done. And between the rain and the drought, between the measles and the typhoid, it's reasonable to believe that this whole farming business was beyond anyone's grasp.

Martha says at one point, **"I have been feeling very much discouraged for the last few days, with neither the help nor ability to do one half the work there is to do — farm men to be**

waited on at morning, noon, and night; four children to be attended to with only a little girl to depend upon ...

It's no surprise where Martha drew her strength to get through the difficult times. **"The more I read the Psalms,"** she wrote in 1871, **"the more I love and appreciate them and feel confident that they will endure forever."**

Births, illnesses, and deaths were a part of life on the farm. Martha's first child, Fannie, was born in 1868, followed by Fred in 1870, Harlan in 1872, Homer in 1873, Clara in 1875, Clayton in 1879, Jason in 1882, Florence in 1886, and Paul in 1890. A tenth child died at birth in 1878. On the day of each birth, she regularly records her emotions about her new son or daughter and her desires and prayers for them.

Her faith in God was resolute. She took seriously her responsibility to provide a godly home. When her firstborn, Fannie, arrived in 1868, she wrote, **"Between four and five o'clock...as this dreary afternoon was sinking away amid storms and clouds, our little daughter Fannie entered our home to fill its lonely rooms with light and song and gladden the coming years with her love and smiles. But then [here she quotes a poem] 'who may read the future? For our darling we crave all blessings sweet---And pray that he who feeds the crying ravens---will guide our daughter's feet.' Yes, guide them safely through the pearly gates into the beautiful city of God."** On the occasion of her son Jason's birth in 1882, she wrote, **"At half past three this morning, our darling son, Jason, came into our home — a poor little piece of humanity yet possessing a life that will exist when time and worlds will have passed away. Upon this first morning of thy life, what blessing do I desire for thee? That my precious son may be strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and that the power of God may be upon him. Oh, I do ask that his life may be all for Jesus. ...may he ever be loving and faithful. And at last when his feet have proven weary with the march of life may the loving Savior gather him home—to that happy home in heaven."**

Disease and illnesses were a significant threat to the family. In early December, 1874, her husband James became ill with typhoid fever. He was not able to be out of bed until December 30th, and was not out of the house until January 25, 1875. In 1881, her son Fred took sick on October 1 with some type of fever, was very sick for 2 weeks, and stayed in Cedarville with relatives to be close to the doctor. It was five weeks before Fred was able to return home, and he did not go back to school until November 17.

But even worse, Martha also faced the death of 3 of her children, one at birth, one in infancy, and one in his late teens. In 1888, Florence at the age of two became quite ill. Martha talks about a “burning fever,” so maybe it was scarlet fever or typhoid fever. On the very day that Florence died, Martha wrote the following in her journal: **“....At four o’clock this afternoon our darling little Florence left us. O it was so hard to say good bye. While we gathered around her little bed we wept.... O to think that Florence is gone. O what a glorious change for Florence, who can picture the glory—taken as she was from the bed of illness—of pain and suffering and thirst and burning fever and ushered into the realm of eternal glory, into the warm embrace of the Savior that gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom. I have never realized so fully what death is as I have done today. O how utterly helpless we are and powerful God is. Dr. Miller stayed with us till the last—Uncle Ervin and Aunt Bell remained and Uncle Ervin had worship with us. We sang the twenty third Psalm and he read 103 Psalm.”**

Her last child, Paul contracted tuberculosis and died at the age of 19 far away from Martha where he was being treated for the disease. She writes on May 26, 1910, **“A telegram came from Atlanta from Homer. He had received a long distance telephone message from Ashville and he sent its contents to us as follows ‘Paul is dying.’ ...This afternoon Rev. Taylor and Mrs. Taylor called to direct us to the right place to help us bear our burden. They were not gone long when a telegram came from Homer saying they would be here at 10:30 in the morning. Mr. Taylor said he prayed for Paul every day and at the prayer meeting they remembered him. O how many prayers have gone up that he might be well. But now we know they have**

been answered in a higher and better way than we are able to understand until it is revealed to us in the light of eternity. And while our hearts are breaking may we be helped to say **O God, Thy will be done for there is not any happiness aside or away from Him.**" Paul's body returned by train to Cedarville on May 27, and Martha writes: **"When they brought Paul in and I looked at him so calmly and peacefully sleeping I felt that my life would never be the same that there was something gone out of my life that would never be the same again. But can we not also hope that there will be blessed influence left here that will help us that while he being dead will yet speak to us and be an inspiration to us."**

Martha had what folks today call "old time religion." Whenever the doors of Cedarville's Reformed Presbyterian Church were open on the corner of Main and Church streets, her family was there. And each Sunday, Martha recorded the basic content of the weekly sermon. For example on Sunday, July 14, 1894, she first shares the Bible text of the message and then comments, **"And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the light of all Israel, Be strong and of good courage: for thou must go with this people unto to the land which the Lord swore unto their fathers to give to them; and those shall come there to inherit it. Our work, how to perform it. Joshua's work was to lead the Lord's people across the Jordon into the promised land. And we are to help—to teach and although the task is too great, God can give us the needed courage, strength, and power. If we would be strong we must cultivate the grace of the Spirit."** She then continues to share additional thoughts. Martha's Sunday experiences were rich!

She had strong feelings about the keeping of the Sabbath. In her journal entry for August 27, 1899, she included the following: **"A man that lost a horse called [at the house] with his friend for information regarding it when I tried to inform them that this was the Sabbath day and they were on the wrong road. The owner of a lost buggy came to make inquiries. I took occasion to inform him he was off the track too. If he had any business to attend to, to call around tomorrow. No wonder that Jesus commanded the disciples to watch—for Satan is**

around on every hand.” Her reference to the “wrong road” was obviously her commentary as much about their path of life as it was about the road in front of the house.

She was also concerned that her children be in on Saturday night to prepare well for the Sabbath the next day. In that same year 1899 on September 25th, she waits up for Clayton and records: **“All are in bed—it is now nearly ten. I have a fire in the grate; although I am very tired I have a feeling that it is best that I should sit up and wait for Clayton. Saturday night is the last night of the week a girl or boy should have arrangements to be away from home. It is now after ten. Clayton is home.”**

However, Martha was a progressive woman. In April, 1898, at an election for new school district directors, Martha says: **“I attended the meeting for the first time [being a woman!] and cast the first ticket [ballot] ever cast by a woman in this school district. I hope and pray the day is not far distant when they can vote on every question from the highest to the lowest.”** A Mrs. Barber was one of those elected that day, and Martha adds: **“This is the first time a woman has been granted this right in our district. How long we have all been asleep—it is now high time for the people to awake out of sleep on this subject.”**

The children’s education was paramount for Martha. Each year, at the start of her new journal, she recounts the ages of all her children and where they are going to school — the little ones at the McMillan School near their home, which was built in 1869 on the corner of Route 42 and MacMillan Rd. on the corner of their property. That school continued to serve students until 1917, the year the new public school opened on N. Main Street in Cedarville (the one that was just demolished). The older children attended Selma High School, and nearly all the children eventually attended college. Some children attended public school in Cedarville, and even several from time to time were going to school in Springfield or Xenia. When the children attended school elsewhere, even in Cedarville, they often stayed with family or friends to avoid the trip back and forth each day. Even the 4 mile trip from Cedarville took some time in a horse and buggy.

Martha had strong feelings about the importance of parenting children in a Godly environment. In her journal on September 23, 1894, she included the following as part of a lengthy explanation: **“If we would have our children right we need to pray and walk more for ourselves. We need to pray earnestly for ourselves that we would be better to teach others. If we would be successful we must do this. What is it to walk wisely? It is to live right lives. To do this is to love God more and to show our love by our lives and to love many more and to show our love this same way. It is also to cultivate our tempers. It is to keep them under check. If we fail at God’s providence and see no light in his dealings with us, it is not acting wisely. To act wisely in the home we must have parental government in the home. There must be a mingling of parental authority with parental love. We are not acting wisely if we leave our children to decide whether they go to church or not or whether they ramble about on the street or not. We are God’s appointed guards and bound to them by the tenderest ties. Sometimes when it is too late we find that we have not acted wisely. We should regulate our lives by God’s word. The life must be right at home. We must be consistent Christians at home. We should be gentle and polite and patient in the home although we may find much to vex and annoy us amid the trial or ease of everyday life. Some folks are kind and pleasant everywhere but at home. The home life after all is the true life. A man’s life at home always reveals his true character. We should walk wisely at home because of our influence and our responsibility and because there are streams that flow from the home that will either bless or curse the earth. The seeds that are producing such a glorious harvest were cultivated in the home. The seed that is bringing forth such an abundant harvest to curse the world was cultivated in the home. The home of the godly is a training school where boys and girls are trained for the university of heaven....”** This gives you a sense of the extended nature of some of her daily journal entries.

Like all parents who sacrifice for their children, Martha had high hopes for hers. As her son Homer was departing for college in September 1892, she says: **“I helped Homer pack his trunk tonight. He leaves for Monmouth College in the morning. For years I have longed and planned and hoped that he might have the advantage of a college education. Now I do hope**

that he will never stop short of getting the very best that can be obtained. It is near midnight. There were so many things to be thought of, but I must rest ...”

Five of her children graduated from College and three went on to advanced education in seminaries or special schools. For College, they found themselves in Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Connecticut, as well as Cedarville to complete their educations. In fact the children ended up all over the country during College and the years after. From New York (where Fannie lived) to California (where Homer pastored for a time) and from Colorado (where Clayton and Jason went for a double wedding to sisters) to Florida (where Martha once went for a medical recovery). For example, in her journal entry for January 1, 1903, Martha recounts that Fannie is in Port Jarvis, New York, Fred and Harlan are in Des Moines, Iowa, Homer is in Lowndesville, North Carolina, Clara is at Burleson College in Texas, and Clayton and Jason are at Tarkio [TAR – key – o] College in Missouri [*United Presbyterian College, 1883 – 1991*]. In 1907, Martha mentions Jason’s return from a tour of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

In early 1894, Homer continued his education during some rather lean years. Martha says, **“Homer went down to tell the folks in town goodbye. Mr. McMillan took him to Springfield to the evening train to go back to [school]. On account of the scarcity of money and hard times in the country ... it was quite a struggle and at a great sacrifice that he went back ... While I feel sad for him to go, I know I would have felt more than I could have expressed if he had not gone. For something tells me it is worth all the sacrifices, all the struggle.”**

During these lean years, Cedarville College following its charter in 1887, was a languishing venture that had little more than that charter, \$1,000 in cash, and a board of trustees to its name. The “hard times in the country” that Martha referred to — including a drought and two recessions — crippled the fundraising for the new college in the early 1890’s. The board of trustees voted to “abandon the enterprise,” but in 1892, a \$25,000 bequest renewed interest in the college and plans were made to hire faculty, secure facilities, and open in the Fall of 1894.

On September 19, 1894, Martha says, **“we ... began the day by taking Homer and Clara to the opening of Cedarville College...Who can foretell the end? We came home and had supper and went back to the opening exercises of the College at the Opera House. Music fine and audience large. The occasion grand. Everyone pleased.”** 32 students had enrolled and classes were held in the home owned by Dr. David Steele on Route 42. The house is still there and owned by a Cedarville University faculty member.

With the enrollment of Homer and Clara at Cedarville, there was now the possibility of no more packing trunks, no more sending children on the train... Martha's sons and daughters, if they chose to, could pursue their education right here, in their hometown. The following year on September 18, 1895, Martha writes: **“This morning Paul and I took Clara down to the college opening. The exercises were held in our church, but tomorrow the students will be received in the new college building. There was quite a delegation of students.”** What is today called Founders Hall opened that Fall.

1897 was an exciting year for the family. Corn sold at 20 cents a bushel, potatoes at 25 cents. James and Martha celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary, and on June 10 Martha says, **“Mr. McMillan, Clayton, Jason, Paul, Uncle Joe, and I attended the first commencement of Cedarville College, at ten o'clock in the Opera House. The five graduates were Raymond Gorbald of Ross, Ohio; John Bickett of Xenia; John Orr, Calvin Morton, and our son, Homer McMillan, of Cedarville. ... Dr. David McKinney, President of the College, conferred the diplomas. He said, ‘Young men of the graduating class, and my boys ... you bid your alma mater farewell today... but we will follow you with our prayers. We hope, however high the position you may attain, you will never forget Cedarville College or duty. Consecrate yourselves to God, Live helpful lives, And God will bless and direct you.’”** Martha continued: **“This was a grand gathering in the Opera House today. If the graduating class can never forget this day I feel sure that some of the rest of us will always remember it. It will always stand out above and over days bright and beautiful.May the remembrance of ...this day help and strengthen us through the years. “Commencement Day” not finished but beginning!**

May all that is good and best and highest and grandest and noblest and holiest in life crown my boys is the prayer of this Mother."

However, the children who went elsewhere to college traveled to these "far off" locations by train—these trains came through Cedarville daily on the double tracks and stopped at the Cedarville station. Martha and James travelled extensively as well to attend college graduations, weddings, to eventually visit their adult children, and later in life for medical treatments. Many of these trips were quite lengthy.

Just from 1900 to 1906 alone, James and Martha traveled to Kansas City, to Des Moines, Iowa for 1 ½ months, to South Carolina, Tennessee, and Michigan for 2 ½ months, to California for 7 months, to Missouri for 1 month, and to St. Louis for 8 months, most of the latter being for medical treatment for James. However, there were times when James and Martha could not go. In October 1908, Clayton and Jason left for Greeley, Colorado to marry two sisters, Edith and Nelle Rankin. On October 22, Martha says, **"Father and I here alone. Our thoughts and hearts are "over the hills" and far away at Greeley.... The hour for the wedding is here. How much we would love to be there—but that was impossible—as I would not have been equal to the undertaking. How strange to think that these boys and girls have indeed left the Old Home Nest to go out to make homes for themselves—where they will work out the great problem of their lives. May they never lose sight of their great accountability. 'For it is not all of life to live or all of death to die.'"**

However, while on their trips, Martha would assign the responsibility to complete the farm journal daily to one of her children or a trusted farm hand. She would keep her own journal on each trip, and then sew that journal into the back of the farm journal on her return. For the California trip, Martha completed a separate journal volume. She was serious about the record of what she was doing and experiencing as well as what continued to go on at the farm.

You might imagine that after seeing her children through college Martha might decide to slow down, take things easy for a while. But that was not her style, and there was far too much going on at the turn of the century for her to put down her pen. **January 1, 1900: “This is the first time I have written 1900 in this book. Since yesterday, we have passed into a new year and into a new century...Many whose lives have been interwoven into ours have passed from this earth. We can ask ourselves, ‘What shall this twentieth century, or even this year, bring to us?’ Let us not wait for the answer, but let us seek refuge ‘under the shadow of Him who is the Almighty.’”**

Indeed, the 20th century brought changes to the McMillan household. Renovations around the farmhouse included a telephone in 1902, new coal furnace in 1905, a bathroom, and an automobile in 1912. Sons- and daughters-in-law joined the family, followed by doted-on grandchildren.

In November, 1908, the day-to-day care of the farm was transferred to their son, Clayton, and James and Martha transitioned into a new life of retirement in a house in Yellow Springs. Martha shares about this event and its impact on her. **“This afternoon the order was for us to leave the old and depart to our new house at the Yellow Springs. It was the farthest from our plans for we really felt we were of such importance the old plantation could not run without us but when we arose and obeyed the call, this feeling vanished. Mr. Mc. And I came in our own conveyance out and Walter Murdock and Clara come on the Express with our trunks. We were not long here until the fires were burning brightly and such a nice supper on the table. The house is furnished nicely and everything is in perfect order when we stepped in. Now since we are here and the old home left the change seems so sudden. I wonder if this is not something like the change will be when we leave here [this world], and go to that home across Jordan. I mean in point of suddenness, but not in brightness—and in glory and in triumph—never. I have kept this book through all the days and months and years since January fifteenth 1867—41 years—10 months and four days. The happenings of our family at the old home on the Pike near Cedarville Ohio. Many have been the changes in that time as**

family have come and gone and tonight are scattered here and there—far and near—May we not hope and pray—that in the evening we may all be gathered home into that glorious and beautiful city of God.

“Now this is the end—the book is closed—forever and it came sooner than I thought—‘Where the tree of life is blooming meet me there.’ Farewell forever.” With these words on November 10, Martha ends her entries in the farm journal for 1908, representative of the closing of their years on the farm. But she begins a new journal as they take up housekeeping in their new home in Yellow Springs.

Unfortunately, because of the illnesses of both James and Martha, they return to the farm in 1909. In fact after entering a hospital in January of that year in Columbus, Martha is encouraged to finish her recovery in Florida for the winter, which she does, returning to the farm in mid-June.

The next year on January 15, 1910, she can say: **“This is the anniversary of our marriage, 1867–1910. How many years did I say! Well, everything has changed so much since then, so changed you can hardly think it is the same old world. Those who were the young folks then are the old gray heads of today. The years have passed so swiftly that we were not aware how quickly they were going.”**

By 1912, James and Martha are living here in the village of Cedarville with Mary Murdock, an aunt of Martha’s. Both are not well. On January 9, Martha says, **“I am happy to say I feel a change for the better ---last night the distressing pain quieted so I could turn in the bed and have peace. Mr. Mc. in bed most of the day.”** Clayton continues on the farm, and Martha reports on May 18 that he bought an automobile. Unfortunately, Martha regularly reports about mechanical trouble with the car, as well as tire trouble, and even running out of gas. In fact, she and James were to go for their first ride in the automobile on May 24th, but Martha says, **“Clayton came to take Mr. Mc. and me out in the automobile, but it stopped still and we had to give up on the ride.”** Finally on June 3, she says, **“Clayton took Rankin and Mrs.**

Patterson and father and me for quite a ride up past Hoovels and back, past the Rifles home, fifteen miles in all." After lamps were put on the automobile on June 19, Clayton drove them to Jamestown and according to Martha, they had a nice ride home. Many entries in the journal during the summer report on the car and its troubles.

October 8, 1912 was a momentous day. She reports on all the activities of the day and then writes the following: **"This evening a change came very suddenly to father—breath so short and quick—it was evident a change was near. He peacefully passed away near nine o'clock. Death never appeared to me as it did tonight—you could almost see this world receding and the other world so near that it seemed but a step across. As he neared the end we all noticed the peace and calmness that came over his face. O the nothingness of the honors and glory of this world when we come to meet death. What do the dying need: Only Jesus—only Jesus. 'For he can make the dying bed seem soft as downey pillows are. While on his breast I lay my head and breath my life out sweetly then.'** Let us take Jesus for our all and all and live to help others to find him. **Father has had four long years of a mental trouble [Alzhiemers??] —but all that has passed now—for he has seen him—and will be like him, is our comfort."**

On August 5, 1913, Martha began her final journal entry in the usual way, writing, **"This has been an ideal day, The Dr. was here and gave me my 22[nd] treatment [for rheumatism]. Mary and the children making the most of the day with us. At four o'clock she left for Columbus—they will get to Sister Hunts about seven o'clock. Miss Nadie still in bed."** One week later, on August 12, 1913, Martha finally **"reached the sunset shores,"** fulfilling the promise of her first journal entry in 1867. There, she was reunited with her husband, James, her dear son, Paul, and her infant daughter, Florence.

At this point in the journal, the handwriting abruptly changes, and an unidentified author, perhaps one of her children, brings Martha's story to a close.

The writer says, **“The above [August 5th] is the last entry made by the hand of she who for the last 46 years has wielded the pen in chronicling, day by day, the leading events in the home as well as happenings in the community. But as it required another to compile the story of Moses in the Pentateuch, so a different pen must finish the record of that noble life which so quietly slipped thru the veil into the Father’s mansion.”**

The new author documents the events of each day in Martha’s life from August 6th to the 12th, the day of her death, and then the writer concludes with the following:

“The homecoming at this season was an event to which she always looked forward with much pleasure... May we not indulge in the hope that she is looking forward to another, more blessed homecoming — when all, including those already there, will constitute an unbroken circle... The precious letters of condolence which have come in from so many quarters go to show that she was not only loved and appreciated by her own family but by many others who had the privilege of knowing her.” Thus ends the journals.

Although she closed her journal 100 years ago, we relate to so many aspects of Martha’s life. Through her words, we see *our* homes, *our* families, *our* community. Through her heart for Christ and her family, we understand the legacy we are writing today for generations to come.

Credits:

Carol Lee, CU Senior Communication Specialist: *some of the text of the presentation.*

Rankin and Lenora MacMillan, grandson and granddaughter-in-law of Martha: *notes from each Journal that make working through them much easier.*

MacMillan Journals/macmillan.dairies.public library program.2013